

In a first, US university to send students to Cuban hospitals

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With long strained US-Cuban relations on the mend, Michigan State University has become the first US school offering medical students routine learning time in Cuban hospitals, MSU announced Wednesday.

While some US students have attended Cuba's [medical school](#) on their own in the past, the development is a landmark for US institutions of higher education since bilateral ties were reestablished in July after five decades of Cold War bad blood.

"This is a first ... for American [medical](#) students to be able to walk the halls of three of Cuba's main hospitals in Havana and receive credit for the experience," William Cunningham, assistant dean for the College of Osteopathic Medicine in West Michigan, said in a statement.

The goal of the two-week program for osteopathic and human medicine students, which starts in April, is to study how Cuba's universal health care has achieved stellar low infant mortality rates while operating on a [shoestring budget](#).

"We want them to understand that even with all of the advances in medical technology here in America, Cuba's medical system is grounded in primary care and public health and they've truly been able to track the health statistics of their population with a lot less," Cunningham added.

Communist Cuba's state medical care is grounded in primary and preventative care.

About 30 US students have applied for the program so far, MSU said.

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